

ABSTRACT

Early Childhood Development: Towards designing a National Policy Framework

Freda Marjorie Thomas

The thesis study is based on examination of inter-disciplinary research in 'socio-economics, developmental psychology and neurobiology' as well as observations and outcomes from early childhood programme evaluations. The fundamental evidence based on the resulting findings has 'converged' into a set of key 'principles' which are responsible for the compelling influence of early environments on early child development and in turn, the contribution of the latter to the early accumulation of human capital. The core concept of the study is to investigate how this information applied to the evolving process of early childhood policy development can be employed in the design of a comprehensive, pragmatic national Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy framework and a supporting implementation strategy. The equally compelling argument throughout is the relevance and more important, the urgent need to apply these principles to improve ECD. In this context, ECD would then serve as an integral component of an efficient strategy to lay the foundation for life-long learning and for the formation of early human capital in order enhance productivity going into the future and 'improve the quality of life.'

Key words: Freda Thomas: Early Childhood Development; (ECD); ECD policy; human capital.